

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8446
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 4225

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ECON, SU
SUBJ: NIMEIRI SEPTEMBER FACE THE NATION SPEECH

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: NIMEIRI USED SEPTEMBER SPEECH TO SUDANESE PUBLIC TO BOLSTER MORALE FOLLOWING EXTREMELY DIFFICULT SUMMER DURING WHICH FLOODS AND OTHER CALAMITIES RESULTED IN SEVERE PETROLEUM, SUGAR AND OTHER SHORTAGES AND POWER OUTAGES. HE ANNOUNCED NUMBER ECONOMIC REFORMS AND INDICATED THAT CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOARDERS AND BLACK MARKETEERS WOULD BE INTENSIFIED. ALSO SAID CORRUPTION IN SSU WILL BE ADDRESSED. NIMEIRI BRIEFLY COMMENTED ON RECENT CRITICISMS IN LOCAL PRESS ABOUT RECONCILIATION. SPEECH WAS DEVOID OF FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS EXCEPT BRIEF MENTION THAT HE WOULD BE TRAVELLING TO U.S. AND EUROPE. END SUMMARY

1. NIMEIRI'S SEPTEMBER FACE THE NATION SPEECH WAS BROADCAST MONDAY EVENING AND FULL TEXT PUBLISHED IN SUNA TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12. SPEECH ALMOST TOTALLY DEALT WITH
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DOMESTIC ISSUES, PRINCIPALLY FUEL AND FOOD SHORTAGES AND POWER AND WATER DISRUPTIONS WHICH PLAGUED CAPITAL AND REST OF COUNTRY IN AUGUST. WHILE ACCEPTING FULL RESPONSIBILITY, NIMEIRI NOTED THAT PROBLEMS WERE DUE TO UNPRECEDENTED NATURAL CAUSES AND WERE EXACERBATED BY HOARDERS, BLACK MARKETEERS AND OTHERS OF SIMILAR ILK. HE OBSERVED THAT WHILE FOREIGN JOURNALIST WAS IN HIS OFFICE

ELECTRICITY WAS CUT OFF, NOTING THAT HE TOO WAS NOT IMMUNE FROM PROBLEMS FACED BY COMMUNITY GENERALLY. HE ALSO REMINDED KHARTOUM AREA LISTENERS THAT OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY HAD TO BE SERVED AS WELL AND THAT MEANT THAT AT TIMES CAPITAL AREA RESIDENTS HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, TO GO WITHOUT GASOLINE.

2. NIMEIRI CONGRATULATED PUBLIC ON ITS PATIENCE AND DEDICATION. HE SPECIFICALLY PRAISED RAILWAY WORKERS AND ROSE-IRRES DAM ENGINEERS. HE HAD SPECIAL PRAISE FOR GEZIRA FARMERS WHO, HE SAID, DESPITE CATASTROPHE (I.E. JULY FLOODS) HAD PULLED THEMSELVES TOGETHER AND HAD REPLANTED SOME 90 PERCENT OF COTTON CROP. IN GENERAL NIMEIRI INDICATED WORST WAS OVER AND CRISIS HAD PASSED.

3. ON OTHER TOPICS HE MENTIONED SEVERAL ECONOMIC MEASURES BEING TAKEN AS PART OF GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM. HE SAID EXPORT TAX ON COTTON WAS ABOLISHED, GEZIRA FARMERS INCENTIVES WERE CHANGED AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL MEASURES WERE ANNOUNCED. (THIS ASPECT OF SPEECH BEING REPORTED IN MORE DETAIL, SEPTTEL.) NIMEIRI DWELT AT LENGTH ON PROBLEMS OF HOARDING, BLACK MARKETERING AND VARIOUS FORMS OF CORRUPTION INCLUDING IN SSU. HE PROMISED TO ATTACK SUCH ACTIVITIES FORCEFULLY, AND HE ANNOUNCED SEVERAL MEASURES TO BE TAKEN. IN THIS CONNECTION HE ANNOUNCED THAT NUMBER OF NATIONAL FESTIVALS AND SEVERAL PERQUISITES OF SENIOR OFFICIALS INVOLVING HOUSING AND AUTOMOBILES WOULD

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BE REDUCED. IN SHORT, NIMEIRI WARNED PUBLIC INCLUDING OFFICIALS THAT THIS IS A TIME FOR AUSTERITY AND HONESTY AND OFFICIAL POLICY WOULD BE STERN IN MEETING THOSE WHO TRIED TO AVOID THESE REQUIREMENTS.

4. NIMEIRI HAD LITTLE TO SAY REGARDING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OR FOREIGN POLICY. HE BRIEFLY ACKNOWLEDGED RECENT PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ELECTIONS IN SSU. NIMEIRI DOWNPLAYED CONTROVERSY AND ARGUED THAT HE MERELY ATTEMPTING BRING FORMER (OPPOSITION) EXPATRIATES BACK INTO POLITICAL LIFE OF COUNTRY AND TO BENEFIT FROM CONTRIBUTION THEY CAN MAKE.

5. NIMEIRI NOTED POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM MANY SOURCES IN RESPONSE TO FLOOD DISASTER. HE SAID THIS SHOWED THAT SUDAN WAS RESPECTED IN WORLD COMMUNITY AS NATION THAT HELPED ITSELF. HE ALSO MENTIONED WITH NO EMBELLISHMENT THAT HE WOULD BE TRAVELLING SOON TO U.S., GERMANY, AND SPAIN.

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6. COMMENT: PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF SPEECH WAS ANNOUNCEMENT OF ECONOMIC REFORMS WHICH IMPORTANT IN CONTEXT IMF NEGOTIATIONS. NIMEIRI CHOSE NOT RPT NOT TO BE HARSH IN REACTING TO CRITICISMS OF MININFO BONA MALWAL AND OTHERS OVER APPARENT GROWING POWER OF SADIQ AL-MAHDI IN SSU. (SEE KHARTOUM 4133), BUT NEITHER DID HE SAY ANYTHING THAT WOULD SATISFY HIS CRITICS. CLEARLY, HIS PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IN SPEECH WAS, ON ONE HAND, TO BOLSTER PUBLIC MORALE AND RESOLVE AFTER EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AUGUST/RAMADAN AND, ON OTHER HAND, TO REMIND EVERYBODY THAT HE WAS STILL FULLY IN CHARGE AND WOULD BROOK NO NONSENSE IN FORM OF CHEATING, BRIBERY, HOARDING, ETC. SOME SUDANESE ARE ANNOYED WHEN NIMEIRI INDICATES, AS HE DID IN LAST NIGHT'S SPEECH, CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT SOMEHOW HE WILL GRAPPLE WITH COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS SINGLE-HANDLEDLY; THEY CONSIDER THIS AN INHERENT WEAKNESS IN NIMEIRI'S APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT APPARENTLY BELIEVES, AND NOT WITHOUT SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT WITHOUT HIS VERY STRONG LEADERSHIP AND EVERN PARTICIPATION, SITUATION WILL BE EVEN WORSE. THEREFORE, NIMEIRI, OUT OF CONCERN FOR WELFARE OF SUDANESE, MUST STEP IN AND TRY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AT HAND. BOTH NIMEIRI AND HIS CRITICS ARE PROBABLY RIGHT. BOGOSIAN

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ECON, SU, (NIMEIRI, GAAFER MYHAMMED)
To: STATE
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